

Congressman

DAVID N. CICILLINE

Proudly Representing the 1st District of Rhode Island



December 31, 2019

Dear Friend,

With another year coming to a close, I am reminded just how thankful I am that you've put your trust in me to fight on your behalf in Washington, and to deliver results for Rhode Island. It's a responsibility that I take seriously, and a privilege that I never take for granted.

As a member of the Democratic Leadership in the U.S. House, I've worked hard to make sure that your voice is always being heard at the highest of levels of our government. Every week, when I sit down with the Speaker of the House for our leadership meetings, I ask myself, "What can Congress do today to make life better for working people in Rhode Island?"



Democrats took control of the U.S. House in the last election because we promised to fight **For The People** by focusing on creating good-paying jobs, lowering health care costs, and rooting out corruption in Washington. For the last 12 months, that's exactly what we've done.

This has already been one of the most productive sessions of the U.S. House in modern history. Since January, we've passed **more than 400 pieces of legislation**, including bills that raise wages for millions of American workers, protect individuals with pre-existing conditions, lower prescription drug prices, invest in our infrastructure, require background checks on all firearms sales, and fix what's wrong in Washington.

Unfortunately, **Republican Senator Mitch McConnell is still blocking about 80% of the bills we've sent him, including 275 bills that have bipartisan support.** The fact is that Senator McConnell's unprecedented pattern of obstruction benefits only the wealthy corporate special interests that have for years enjoyed total control over Washington, D.C. Rest assured, we are going to continue fighting until Senator McConnell listens to the will of the American people and not the powerful special interests that fund his campaigns.

Despite Mitch McConnell's best efforts, however, I'm proud that my office has delivered real results for Rhode Island over the past year. While these accomplishments may not always make the front page of the *Providence Journal*, they are making a real difference in the lives of folks all across our state. **The work we've gotten done over this past year shows how government can operate at its very best – in a way that's smart, effective, and responsive to the needs of the people it serves.**

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Passing New Laws For The People

From the moment we took the majority in January, Democrats have delivered on our promises to fight For The People. I'm proud that I've played a leading role in passing new laws that are making a real difference:



- On our very first day in the majority, **the House passed two of my proposals to clean up corruption in Washington.** The first requires that every member of the House complete annual ethics training. The second prohibits members of Congress from serving on corporate boards to prevent any prohibited conflicts of interest.
- **Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the CREATES Act.** This is a bill I introduced that will lower prescription drug costs by up to 80% by making it easier for generic drugs to enter the market.
- **The President also signed my bill to honor Elizabeth Buffum Chace.** Ms. Chace was a leader in the fights to end slavery and give women the right to vote. She is a true Rhode Island hero, and I'm proud that we will now have a permanent memorial to her legacy at the Dexter Street Post Office in Central Falls.
- In order to protect thousands of Liberian residents in Rhode Island who were facing the threat of deportation, I worked to pass **the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act into law.**
- I worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass the **Protecting NATO Skies Act**, a new law that places strict limits on sales of F-35 planes to Turkey in light of that country's recent efforts to grow closer to Russia.
- Finally, I worked to pass legislation that will **strengthen Rhode Island's economy** by reviving the National Scenic Byways Program, an initiative that provides funding for economic development on roads like **Route 102** that stretches from North Kingstown to North Smithfield.

In addition to these bills, which I authored, I also co-sponsored other legislation that became law, including:

- **The Small Business Reorganization Act** that makes it easier for small business owners to navigate the bankruptcy laws in our country.
- **The Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act** to crack down on animal abusers and ensure the authorities can bring them to justice.
- **The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act** that will enhance benefits for Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange during the war.

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All of these pieces of legislation represent important progress in getting government working for Rhode Islanders, but sadly, Mitch McConnell's obstruction has prevented a vote on a number of bills, including many that I have cosponsored, that address other urgent needs of the American people, including:

- **The For The People Act**, legislation I helped craft to implement the most comprehensive anti-corruption reforms since Watergate. This bill, which was our top priority in the House, included two of my proposals, **the Automatic Voter Registration Act** to require states to register eligible voters and make it easier for young people, working people, and minorities to make their voices heard at the ballot box, and **the DISCLOSE Act** to bring secret corporate political spending out of the shadows
- **The Lower Drug Costs Now Act**, landmark legislation that will give Medicare the power to negotiate directly with drug companies to bring down prices and make those savings available to hardworking families across America.
- **The Protecting Americans with Pre-Existing Conditions Act**, which I cosponsored to protect half a million Rhode Islanders who could suffer higher premiums, and even have their insurance taken away altogether, if President Trump succeeds in repealing the Affordable Care Act through the courts.
- **The Raise the Wage Act** to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, a raise for 33 million Americans, and **the Butch Lewis Act**, to protect the pensions of more than a million workers and retirees.
- **The Paycheck Fairness Act**, to require equal pay for equal work by closing the gender wage gap and giving working women the tools they need to fight back against workplace discrimination.
- **The Climate Action Now Act**, legislation that I co-sponsored to address the urgent challenge that climate change poses to our state and communities across the nation.
- **The SAFE Act** and **the SHIELD Act** to defend our elections from foreign attacks and preserve the foundation of our democracy, every American's right to vote.

Those 400 pieces of legislation also include bills that I introduced and that passed the House with bipartisan support that are currently awaiting a vote in the Senate, including:

- **The AMIGOS Act**, which I introduced to increase trade and investment ties between the United States and Portugal. It is awaiting further action in the Senate.
- **The Equality Act**, my bipartisan bill to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ Americans. This bill is also awaiting consideration in the Senate.

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Funding Priorities For The People

For years, the American people have been forced to endure funding cuts to critical programs at the hands of Republican majorities in the House and Senate. Since taking office earlier this year, House Democrats have worked hard provide robust federal funding to fix our broken health care system, protect the environment, rebuild our nation's crumbling infrastructure, and much more. This includes:

- **\$6 billion** to combat the opioid epidemic that has swept our nation affecting almost every family in some way.
- **\$50 billion** in funding to research new, life-saving cures for diseases, including Alzheimer's and other innovative brain research.
- **\$25 million** for the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct research into the gun violence epidemic, the first time in history that the federal government has conducted this kind of research.
- **\$80 billion** for veterans' medical care, including **\$2 billion** for veteran homelessness assistance, **\$220 million** for suicide prevention and outreach, and **\$9 billion** for higher quality and more accessible mental health services.
- **\$11 billion** to ensure that our nation's servicemembers and their families have the resources they need.
- **\$7.6 billion** for the Census Bureau to ensure that every person is counted in the 2020 Census.
- **\$425 million** to help states secure their election systems from foreign interference.
- **\$2 billion** to help seniors live independent lives.
- **\$3.4 billion** for the Community Development Block Grant program and **\$1.35 billion** for the HOME program to increase access to affordable housing.
- **\$5.8 billion** for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and **\$10.6 billion** for Head Start to help children and their families in need.
- **\$9 billion** in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency to help preserve the environment from the Trump administration's continued assault on protections for vulnerable ecosystems.
- **\$851.5 million** in federal investments in science programs at NASA, the Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation.

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Serving You

Over the past year, my staff in both Pawtucket and Washington have worked relentlessly to serve the people of our great state. In 2019, we:

- Advocated on behalf of cities, towns, and non-profit organizations to secure more than **\$593 million in federal funding** for Rhode Island.
- **Provided casework assistance for 866 Rhode Islanders** who requested help with Social Security, Medicare and Veterans benefits, IRS tax refunds, and other federal agencies.
- So I can hear directly from you, I've **held 91 constituent meetings in Rhode Island's First District, and hosted more than 30 community meetings and events**, including three Senior Resource Fairs, a Town Hall for Veterans, and constituent discussions on health care and prescription drug costs, small business development, infrastructure investment, and cleaning up corruption in Washington.
- Responded to **5,353** calls, letters, and emails from constituents.
- **Arranged 694 tours of the U.S. Capitol** for folks visiting Washington, D.C.
- **Provided 33 internship opportunities** for young people to learn more about the federal government.
- **Provided more than 110 books to three public libraries** in the district through the Library of Congress Surplus Book Program, with another 105 books scheduled for delivery to three additional public libraries in winter 2019.

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Please know that in the year ahead, I will continue to push forward on the issues important to you and your family. If there is ever anything that my office can do, please do not hesitate to reach out by calling 729-5600. Serving you is an honor. Thank you again for your trust.

Warm regards,

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress